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PAGE 01 STATE 059880
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S E C R E T STATE 059880

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 059880

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SUBJECT: INTSUM 516 - MARCH 8, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. ISRAEL. DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN PROBABLY IMPLIED TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN THIS WEEK THAT HE WOULD RESIGN OVER ANY NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY ON THE WEST BANK. BEGIN DOES NOT SEEM INCLINED, ON THE EVE OF HIS VISIT TO THE US, TO RISK A SERIOUS SPLIT IN THE GOVERNMENT BY PRESSING THE ISSUE WITH WEIZMAN. INDEED, WEIZMAN ASSERTED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE LAST NIGHT THAT BEGIN HAS AGREED TO STOP ALL WORK AT THE SETTLEMENT SITES PENDING THE COMPLETION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HERE NEXT WEEK-ESSENTIALLY A REAFFIRMATION OF THE ISRAELI CABINET'S DECISION LATE LAST MONTH ON THIS ISSUE.

2. FOR PERSONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL REASONS, BEGIN WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO OPPOSE AGRICULTURE MINISTER SHARON AND GUSH EMUNIM ENTHUSIASTS ON NEW SETTLEMENTS. BEGIN WOULD RUN LESS OF A POLITICAL RISK IN DOING SO, HOWEVER, THAN IN ANTAGONIZING WEIZMAN.

3. UNLIKE SHARON, WHOSE APPEAL REMAINS LIMITED TO THE EXTREME RIGHT, WEIZMAN'S GROWING REPUTATION FOR MODERATION MIGHT ENABLE HIM TO MAKE COMMON CAUSE NOT ONLY WITH THE LIBERALS OF HIS OWN LIKUD PARTY, BUT ALSO WITH THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE AND PERHAPS IN TIME EVEN WITH THE LABOR PARTY. TO BEGIN, WEIZMAN PROBABLY POSES A
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 059880

POTENTIAL THREAT TO BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT IF HE CHOOSES TO RESIGN.

4. BEGIN PROBABLY COULD REIN IN THE GUSH BY CAPITALIZING ON CURRENT OPPOSITION WITHIN THE CABINET TO NEW SETTLEMENTS. HE MAY SOON HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO; THE GUSH LEADERSHIP IS PLANNING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST WEIZMAN. A MAVERICK GUSH GROUP, MOREOVER, HAS ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO ESTABLISH A NEW SETTLEMENT OVERLOOKING NABULUS, THE LARGEST ARAB TOWN ON THE WEST BANK, WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OR EVEN OF THE GUSH SECRETARIAT.
(CONFIDENTIAL)

5. WEST BANK. WEST BANKERS ON THE WHOLE ARE GROWING MORE PESSIMISTIC REGARDING THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS OF SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE. THEY BELIEVE THAT CHANCES FOR PEACE AND RESOLUTION OF THE WEST BANK OCCUPATION ARE SLIPPING AWAY DUE TO PERCEIVED ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE. AS A RESULT, THEY ARE SHOWING GREATER SUPPORT FOR THE HARDLINE REJECTIONIST VIEWPOINT. THIS CURRENT SENTIMENT AMONG MANY WEST BANKERS HAS BEEN EVIDENCED IN HEIGHTENED WEST BANK STUDENT DISCONTENT LEADING TO SEVERAL DEMONSTRATIONS

IN NABLUS AND HALHUL LAST MONTH. POPULAR SYMPATHY FOR SUCH PROTEST ACTIONS HAS RISEN.

6. DESPITE THE WIDESPREAD WEST BANK UNHAPPINESS OVER CURRENT PEACE PROSPECTS, SADAT'S INITIATIVE ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE PROMPTED MANY WEST BANKERS TO GIVE CONSIDERABLY DEEPER THOUGHT TO THEIR ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT THEY CAN REALISTICALLY ASPIRE TO FOR THE WEST BANK AS PART OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT. AT THIS STAGE, WEST BANK LEADERS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PLO PUBLICLY AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT AGREE TO REPLACE IT IN NEGOTIATIONS.

7. PROMINENT WEST BANKERS HAVE ALSO RECENTLY GIVEN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 059880

GREATER THOUGHT TO THE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT THAT THEY COULD REALISTICALLY HOPE TO ACHIEVE. A PROMINENT RAMALLAH LAWYER HAS REPORTEDLY PREPARED A DETAILED SET OF GUIDELINES FOR A SETTLEMENT.

8. IN GENERAL, THE THINKING OF WEST BANKERS SEEMS TO HAVE EVOLVED TO THE POINT WHERE, PROVIDED THAT ISRAEL FIRST RELINQUISHED THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, THEY WOULD ACCEPT SUCH ASPECTS AS:

(A) "SELF-DETERMINATION" RATHER THAN A COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT WEST BANK/GAZA STATE;

(B) SOME ARRANGEMENT FOR LINKAGE TO JORDAN;

(C) A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, UNDER A NON-ISRAELI TRUSTEESHIP, BEFORE A PLEBISCITE;

(D) THE PERMANENT PRESENCE OF AT LEAST SOME ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, PROVIDED THAT THEY WERE PLACED UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE PALESTINIAN ENTITY;

(E) OPEN BORDERS AND FREEDOM OF COMMERCE WITH ISRAEL.

9. FOR THE MOMENT, THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE OF PESSIMISM AND FRUSTRATION AMONG WEST BANKERS, WITH THE CONCOMITANT RISE IN HARDLINE SENTIMENT, MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT THE PRIVATE THINKING OF WEST BANK MODERATES WILL BE EXPRESSED TOO OPENLY. WE BELIEVE IT IS SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY MAY HAVE BEGUN TO SHIFT SOMEWHAT AWAY FROM DOGMATIC SUPPORT OF THE PLO TOWARD MORE INDEPENDENT THINKING AND, PARTICULARLY, TO CONSIDER SPECIFICS OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 059880

10. EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTS THAT SOME AMERICAN CITIZEN CHILDREN OF ARAB DESCENT WHO ARE TEMPORARILY RESIDING IN THE WEST BANK HAVE BEEN DENIED PERMISSION TO ATTEND LOCAL SCHOOLS. THE EMBASSY AND THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN JERUSALEM HAVE INTERCEDED AT THE WORKING LEVEL ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. (SECRET)

11. JORDAN-PLO. THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE PLO ARE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A POSSIBLE RENEWAL OF THEIR BILATERAL TALKS WHICH BECAME DORMANT SEVERAL MONTHS PREVIOUSLY. IN RECENT WEEKS, HUSSEIN HAS RECEIVED AND ANSWERED AT LEAST TWO MESSAGES FROM ARAFAT. WHILE THE TEXTS OF THE MESSAGES EXCHANGED WERE INNOCUOUS, THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ORAL REQUEST FROM THE PLO FOR A MEETING AND BY A POSITIVE JORDANIAN RESPONSE THAT THE PLO WAS "WELCOME".

12. BOTH PARTIES, HOWEVER, APPEAR DETERMINED TO ADOPT A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO THE RESUMPTION OF A DIALOGUE. NONETHELESS, THE TWO SIDES SEEM TO SENSE THAT THE MOMENT IS APPROPRIATE TO EXPLORE THEIR EXISTING COMMON INTERESTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH MIDEAST PEACE TALKS AT A DELICATE STAGE, EACH IS RELUCTANT TO UNDERMINE HIS RESPECTIVE POSITION UNTIL A CLEARER IDEA EMERGES WHETHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE EFFORTS WILL PROGRESS.

13. CONSEQUENTLY, THE JORDANIANS ARE DESCRIBING THE POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF THEIR DIALOGUE AS BEING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DISCUSSIONS BEGUN EARLIER. FOR EXAMPLE, PRIME MINISTER BADRAN REMINDED A KUWAITI EDITOR LAST MONTH THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT HAD BEGUN IN MARCH 1977. IN THIS INTERVIEW, BADRAN CLAIMED THAT "THERE HAS BEEN NO BREAK IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PLO." IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY AMMAN, MOREOVER, JORDANIAN OFFICIALS HAVE CONSISTENTLY PORTRAYED
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 059880

THE EXCHANGES WITH THE PLO AS UNEXCEPTIONABLE, SUGGESTING THAT THE POSSIBLE PLO-JORDANIAN TALKS WOULD FOCUS ON ARAB UNITY AND ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

14. ARAFAT'S MOTIVES FOR REVIVING THE DIALOGUE ARE UNCLEAR, BUT HE MIGHT SHARE WITH THE JORDANIANS A BELIEF

THAT EITHER A SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE WILL NECESSITATE SOME MEASURE OF PLO-JORDANIAN COOPERATION. AN IMPROVING JORDANIAN-PLO RELATIONSHIP WOULD ALSO GIVE ARAFAT A MODERATE JORDANIAN 'CARD' TO PLAY OFF AGAINST THE PRESSURES OF ARAB HARDLINERS SUCH AS SYRIA.

15. UNSURPRISINGLY, THE PLO LEADER HAS RECRUITED A MEDIATOR TO STIMULATE THE DIALOGUE. THE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT RECENTLY TRAVELED TO AMMAN TO UNDERLINE ALGERIAN SUPPORT FOR THE DIALOGUE.

16. WHEN A QATARI PAPER LISTED PLO DEMANDS GUIDING THE RESUMPTION OF A DIALOGUE, PALESTINIAN SOURCES CITED IN THE ARTICLE ALLEGED THAT THE DEMANDS SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS PRECONDITIONS. THESE DEMANDS INCLUDED:

(A) PERMISSION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PLO MILITARY BASES IN THE JORDAN VALLEY AND SOUTH OF THE DEAD SEA, AND FOR COORDINATION WITH JORDANIAN FORCES STATIONED THERE;

(B) FULL JORDANIAN COMMITMENT TO ARAB SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS STIPULATING THE PLO AS SOLE LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE; AND

(C) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PLO POLITICAL COMMITTEES
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 059880

IN THE 10 PALESTINIAN CAMPS IN JORDAN.

17. KING HUSSEIN IS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEDE TO A PLO MILITARY OR POLITICAL PRESENCE IN JORDAN. HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER THIS, IN FACT, WAS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE BREAKDOWN IN THE EARLIER PLO-JORDANIAN DISCUSSIONS. THUS, A RESUMPTION OF DIRECT PLO-JORDANIAN TALKS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY DEPEND ON THE PLO'S FOREGOING SUCH DEMANDS, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT. (SECRET) VANCE

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